

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 8

LOS ANGELES TIMES
22 JULY 1981

Classified Secrets Got Out Under Information Act, Spy Chiefs Say

WASHINGTON (AP)—Officials of the major American intelligence agencies testified before a Senate panel Tuesday that classified secrets have been inadvertently disclosed in their responses to Freedom of Information Act inquiries.

Central Intelligence Agency Deputy Director Bobby Ray Inman said "there have been mistakes" in which the CIA released information "that was of enormous concern."

In one case, Inman told the Senate Intelligence Committee, the life of an intelligence source was endangered. In other cases, confidential material supplied by foreign governments was disclosed, he said.

Inman, along with Lt. Gen. Lincoln D. Faurer, director of the National Security Agency, and Maj. Gen. Richard X. Larkin, director of

the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified in support of legislation to exempt their agencies from some provisions of the 1966 law.

"The KGB (the Soviet intelligence agency) can ask (for information), and if we don't comply, they can also appeal and take us to court under the law," Inman said.

Asked whether the agencies would have to respond to an information request by Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev, Inman nodded.

Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.), chairman at the committee, asked whether "a recognized enemy country" could make similar demands.

"By law we are required," Inman said.

"Even though we might be at war with that country—that's true?"

Goldwater asked.

"Yes, sir," Inman said.

The views of Inman, Faurer and Larkin were challenged by spokesmen for the American Newspaper Publishers Assn. and for the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

"It seems somewhat improbable that agencies with a sophisticated capability for evaluating information could inadvertently release classified data," Robert Lewis of Sigma Delta Chi said.

Lewis pointed out that no court has yet required intelligence agencies to release information classified as secret. He said disclosure of secret information is most often the result of deliberate, politically inspired leaks, not inquiries under the Freedom of Information Act.

As an example, he cited disclosure of the new radar-resistant "Stealth" bomber technology during last year's election campaign.

"The act is an annoyance to the CIA, but public servants often find accountability annoying," he said.